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BOM : ORIENTAL RUGS | The Kalman Collection

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

100 Queen's Park, Toronto 5, Ontario, WAlnut 3–6611

ORIENTAL RUGS | The Kalman Collection

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FOREWORD

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kalman came to Toronto in 1952. Their previous residence was Cairo, where for 26 years they had an unparalleled opportunity to appreciate, and later to collect, Oriental rugs. Of an original collection of 95 rugs, some 40 were sold before they left Egypt. Now a further selection has been made so that the present display is the quintessence of their appreciation and discrimination. The Museum is most indebted to them for the privilege of making these rugs available for the aesthetic pleasure and instruction of a much larger public than could ever hope to see them in the Kalman home.

The opportunity is also offered—in such an exhibition—of providing a catalogue which can be a source of information to both scholars and the interested public. Mr. Kalman has kindly joined Mrs. G. Brett, the Curator of our Department of Textiles and Costume, in preparing this introduction to the collection. We feel that it will provide not only information on the various designs typical of localized tribes and districts but also—what is far less common in such catalogues —some technical details of material, weave and knotting.

At a time when more and more Canadians have the leisure, the means and—most important—the inclination to become collectors, this example of a rich private collection should offer a stimulus and a guide to many who are prepared, or have already begun, to enjoy the pleasure that the collector's hobby can provide.

A. D. TUSHINGHAM,
Head, Division of Art and Archaeology
Royal Ontario Museum.

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41 | SAMARKAND (KASHGAR), Central Asian.

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INTRODUCTION

The collection of rugs in the present exhibition was brought together over a number of years in Egypt—a paradise for collectors of oriental rugs.

There, as in other Near Eastern countries, nearly every house is embellished with carpets and rugs. The larger hand-made pieces are called carpets, the smaller ones rugs, and factory-made floor coverings are practically unknown.

Most European residents of the Near East sooner or later come under the magic spell of the oriental rug. Rugweaving is a most fascinating art, and requires great skill. On this account, and because of its beautiful and varied patterns, contrasts and harmonies of colour, the oriental rug is equal to any art treasure.

Most people, at least in the beginning, will buy modern products for practical use for floor or wall coverings, curtains and bedspreads. Later some of them, the future collectors, will discover the difference between the warm, mellow colours, the more delicate design and the soft texture of the old, and the coarser design, strident colouring and hard, commercialized quality of the modern rugs. This discovery marks the beginning of a long exciting experience, similar to that of collecting old china or antique silver.

It takes many years of trial and error to acquire knowledge of rugs. To be able to distinguish the old from the new is to know the difference between natural and chemical dyes, the various knots, and the quality of the yarns used. To become an expert, reliable books must be studied, but above all hundreds of rugs must be examined, preferably under the guidance of an expert on the subject. As time goes by it will be discovered that most of the rugs acquired during the first years of collecting prove unworthy, and will be changed. Not a single piece from the first fifteen years of the collection shown here has survived. This was due to the collector's lack of experience in recognizing the natural fast vegetable and animal dyes used by rugweavers before the introduction of aniline. During the last hundred years ever increasing use has been made of chemical dyes, which produce bright harsh colours that fade easily and run when the rug is washed. Nevertheless many excellent rugs can be acquired today in Europe and North America, perhaps more easily

than in Egypt, whence British and American servicemen and civilians shipped home hundreds of beautiful specimens towards the end of the second world war. In this era of broadloom carpeting the love of beauty is evidently still alive.

The range of the present exhibition is limited in two ways. First, this is not a collection of rare sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masterpieces, but of excellent examples of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that can be acquired by any amateur without the cost running into five, or with rare exceptions, four figures. The second is its scope. Being a private collection it cannot, for financial reasons and for lack of space, include all the six main groups—i.e., Turkish, Caucasian, Central Asian, Persian, Indian and Chinese. As the collection took definite shape it was limited to the first three groups.

It is hoped that the present exhibition will add to the knowledge of oriental rugs and give help to amateurs anxious to extend their collections.

MICHAEL KALMAN

ORIENTAL RUG TECHNIQUE

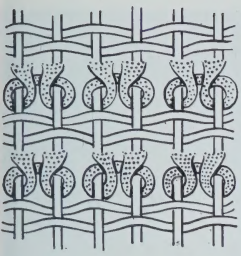
In the study of textiles, both design and technique are of significance. The technical aspects of oriental rug-making, the yarns, dyes and weaving techniques are of great importance in establishing the date and provenance of a rug, for no two types of rug are exactly the same. In centres where rug weaving has been carried on for centuries certain yarns were readily available and certain dye formulas and weaving techniques became established. Waves of outside influence might well cause modifications to design without affecting technique. Rugweaving techniques are very simple, but with them exceedingly varied and complicated designs can be woven.

The first consideration in the technical examination of a rug is the yarn. In Oriental rugs that most generally used is wool. This, besides being most readily available, is durable, takes dye easily and well, and has great warmth—a primary consideration as rugs were first made for a practical purpose, protection against cold. Its relatives, goat and camel hair are also found in rugweaving, the latter in its natural colour, as it does not take dye well.

Cotton is the next most common yarn found in rugs. In some rugs both warp and weft are of cotton; in others wool and cotton are used. As it does not stretch as much as wool, cotton is more suitable for larger carpets. Cotton is never used for the pile except occasionally for small white areas.

Silk is suitable for warp, weft and pile, and is used to a certain extent in Oriental rugs. One in the Kalman collection has a silk pile (*no. 42*).

The colours in Oriental rugs are those which for centuries have been made from the established vegetable and animal fast dye products of many countries. Indigo was used for blues; madder with various mordants, kermes and later cochineal for red. Saffron and tumeric were two of several yellow dyes in use in the Near East. Cutch produced a good brown and logwood with iron a solid black. Natural brown or black animal yarns, while very attractive, are inclined to fade; iron if used carelessly can be a harmful corrosive. While much praise is lavished upon the rich glowing colours of oriental rugs it must be admitted that there was a certain



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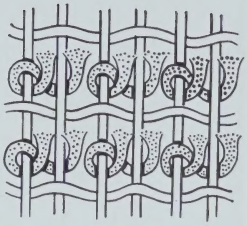

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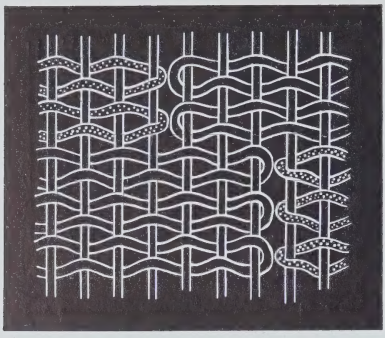
element of hit and miss in the use of dye recipes and the conditions under which dyes were prepared. This accounts for the quite strong changes in shades of colour, which sometimes run in bands across the surface of a rug. The invention of aniline dyes in 1856 has left its imprint in every field of textiles and in nearly every part of the world. The effects of the use of these dyes in oriental rugs have been traced back to between 1865 and 1870[1]. Because aniline dyes of poor quality were often used and their preparation not properly understood they had disastrous results on rugs. Chemical dyes of a more permanent kind are used in most rugs today, but even at their best these dyes have not the warm lustre of the old vegetable and animal dyes.

All oriental rugs are woven on a loom. This consists of a frame with rollers to support the warp and a simple shedding device to raise alternating warp threads. There are two main types of rugs; those with a knotted pile and those which have no pile.

Just where, when and how the knotted pile technique of rugweaving originated is not known. It seems logical that it developed somewhere in the temperate regions which are still rugweaving centres today: Turkey, Persia or Central Asia[2]. Its bulky nature is well suited for protection against winter cold and, it is quite possible that the technique developed from attempts to simulate the fur of animals. Rugs are still made today in Central Europe to resemble sheepskins; they have quantities of long strands of loosely spun wool knotted into them[3].

Two kinds of knot are used in Oriental rugs: Turkish or Ghiordes, and Persian or Sehna. Ghiordes is the name of a town in Turkey and Sehna a town in Persia. The characteristics of these two knots can be best understood by studying diagrams 1, 2 and 3. It should be noted that the pile in rugs woven with the Turkish knot lies parallel with the warp while that with the Persian knot is inclined to lie a little to the left or the right depending on the direction of the knots. This is



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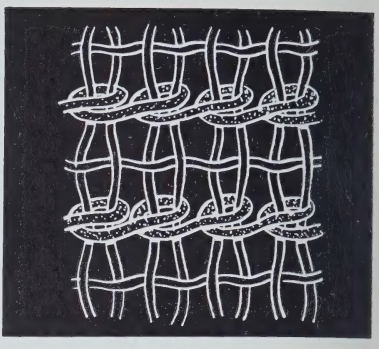

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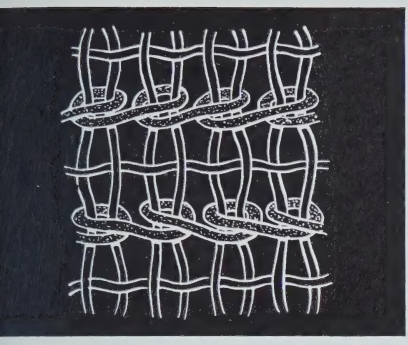
more easily seen in rugs which have a long pile than in those with a short close pile. Between each row of knots lies the ground weft. There are usually two shots of this between each knotted row but occasionally, sometimes in the Kazak for instance, there are several shots between. The number of weft shots frequently varies in one rug.

At each end of a rug there are usually headings of ground weft to form web ends. These vary considerably in length. The sides are handled in two ways, either with a selvage woven in, or over cast—both in a variety of ways. Both the web ends and the selvages often show distinctive features by which they can be recognized as the work of a particular tribe or village.

There are two types of rugs without pile: kilim and sumak. The technique used in kilims is tapestry weave (*see diagram 4*). It is the same as that used in the great European pictorial tapestries and consists of widely spaced warps which are completely covered by fine wefts. These pass back and forth across the warps only so far as required by the design. It is the only rug technique in which only one set of threads other than the warp is required. Of many colours,



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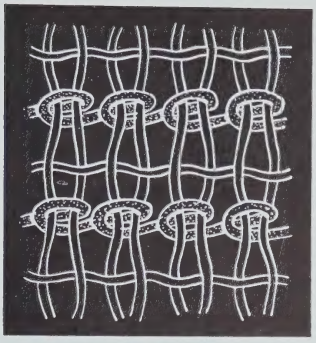

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these form both fabric and pattern. The technique produces a reversible fabric so that a kilim rug can be used either way up.

Sumak weave calls for two wefts, a ground and a pattern weft. The ground weft is usually finer than the pattern weft and passes back and forth from selvage to selvage between every row of heavier pattern wefts. Worked in as required by the design the pattern wefts are all the colours of the design and completely cover the ground wefts. They are usually passed over four threads and back under the last two (*see diagrams 5 and 6*). There are at least three variations of this technique used in rug weaving. In the first two, the long skips, which have a tendency to lie at a slight angle rather than parallel with the ground weft, may lie in the same direction in every row, or the direction may be reversed in alternating rows. In the latter the pattern wefts appear to converge and look like chain stitch. Those in number 47 lie for the most part in one direction but occasionally there is a row worked in the opposite direction. In the third variation the short skips are on the front of the rug (*see diagram 7*); this is used in number 48 .

Notes

1 A. F. Kendrick and C. E. C. Tattersall, *Handwoven Carpets Oriental and European.* (London 1922) vol. II, p. 121.

2 The knotted carpet found in the Pazyryk excavations and said to date from the sixth century B.C. is worked with the Turkish knot and has three shots of ground weft between each row of knots. See S. I. Rudenko, *Kultura naseleniia gornogo Altaia v skifskoe vremia* (Moscow 1953) fig. 197, p. 355. Two pieces of cloth from Eighteenth Dynasty Egypt, which are in Turin, are reported to have a pattern in Persian knots. See G. Wingfield Digby "Persian and Turkish rugs in the Fitzwilliam Museum", *Connoisseur*, vol. CXXVIII, no. 523, pp. 96–103.

3 An early example of the use of this technique, now in the British Museum, was found by Sir Aurel Stein in the Lop Desert excavations. In it there is a Turkish knotted pile on one side, and loops of unspun wool on the other. For this information the writer is grateful to Mr. Harold Burnham who has examined the piece in question.

TURKISH RUGS

Turkish rugs—sometimes called Anatolian and Asia Minor—are usually named from the towns where they were made or marketed and each kind has its own characteristics. Many renowned rugweavers in Turkey were Armenians and Greeks and it was in areas where they lived that many of the centres of rugweaving were, and in some cases still are, located.

Rugweaving in Turkey is an ancient art. The first Oriental rugs brought to Europe came from there, for Turkey was the nearest and most accessible source. They are pictured in Italian, Flemish, and German paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries[1]. Similar patterns may be found not only in Turkish rugs of later centuries but also in Caucasian and Central Asian rugs. A type of seventeenth-century English weaving called "Turkey work" was a knotting technique like that of rugs imported into England at that time but with a hemp warp and weft. Though some Persian rugs were imported into England in the seventeenth century it was only later that they became well known in Europe and with their flowery patterns rapidly gained favour.

Turkish rug designs are predominantly geometric. Orthodox Islam in Turkey (unlike the Shiite sect of Persia) forbade the representation of living creatures in design. Floral motives were permissible but appear in a more or less stylized form even when under Persian influence and woven by Greeks and Armenians.

In Turkey the prayer rug is more commonly found than in any other rugweaving country. Its main characteristic is the representation of the prayer niche, or Mihrab, in the mosque which indicates the direction of Mecca. The type of niche most commonly found in Turkish rugs is that with columns on either side and a hanging lamp. It is most clearly represented in early rugs. Frequently in later examples there are no columns and the lamp has changed into a vase, or even just a spray of flowers. The shape of the niche varies from district to district.

This can be seen by comparing that in the Ghiordes (*no. 5*), the Ladik (*no. 9*), and the Melas (*no. 12*), rugs in this exhibition. There is also in the exhibition a family prayer rug with six niches, one for each man of the family (*no. 15*).

These rugs are usually woven with wool but sometimes with cotton and almost invariably with the Turkish knot. The wool varies considerably in weight and many late Turkish rugs are coarsely woven. In some the pile is short, as in the Ghiordes (which is also very fine), or is long and silky as in the Konia (no. 17). Rugweaving in Turkey deteriorated in the nineteenth century especially following the introduction of aniline dyes.

In this exhibition the Turkish rugs, most of which are dated before the middle of the nineteenth century, are the most important group.

Note

1 See G. Wingfield Digby, "Persian and Turkish Rugs in the Fitzwilliam Museum". *Connoisseur*, vol. CXXVIII, No. 523, pp. 96–97. Also Philip Hendy, *The National Gallery of London* (London 1955), pp. 59–87. And P. M. Campana. *II Tappeto Orientale* (Milan 1945).

1 BERGAMA
Eighteenth century. 6′8″ x 5′5″. 42 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. Bergama is the marketing centre for these rugs, made by several different peoples in the area; hence the variety of design in them.

2 BERGAMA
Second half of the nineteenth century. 3′5″ x 3′. 54 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

3 BERGAMA
Circa 1800. 6′5″ x 6′. 73.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

4 BERGAMA CHANAKALE
Second half of the nineteenth century. 7′2″ x 4′11″. 35 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

5 GHIORDES
Prayer rug. End of the seventeenth century. 5′5″ x 4′2″. 176 knots to the square inch. Warp: wool, Weft: wool. These rugs are the finest and most valuable among the Turkish products of the period.

6 KIRSHEHIR
Saddle bag. Second half of the nineteenth century. 3′6″ x 1′5″. 108 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

7 KONIA
Circa 1800. 10′8″ x 4′4″. 64 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. These rugs are unsurpassed for their silky nap, and are extremely scarce.

8 KUMURJI KULA
Circa 1800. 5′2″ x 4′5″. 90 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

9 LADIK
Prayer rug. Second half of the eighteenth century. 6′3″ x 3′11″. 97.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. These are among the most valuable Turkish rugs, because of their scarcity.

10 MEGRI
First half of the nineteeth century. 6′2″ x 4′2″. 48 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

11 MELAS
Second half of the eighteenth century. 5′1″ x 3′7″. 56 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

12 MELAS
Prayer rug. Circa 1800. 4′4″ x 3′8″. 90 knots to the square inch. Warp: wool, Weft: wool.

13 USHAK
Prayer rug. Second half of the nineteenth century. 5′11″ x 4′5″. 17.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

14 USHAK
Prayer rug. Circa 1900. 5′3″ x 3′10″. 60 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. This is a copy of one of the world's most famous rugs in the possession of the Kaiser Friederich Museum in Berlin, said to date 1500.

15 USHAK SAFF
Prayer rug with several inches. Circa 1800. 4′3″ x 14′7″. 25 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. This rug was made probably for six male members of one family.

16 USHAK
Fragment. Second half of the seventeenth century. 13′4″ x 3′3″ (average width). 48 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. Frequently valuable carpets which were family heirlooms were cut in half when inherited by two brothers. This may be an example in point.

12 | MELAS, Turkish.

5 | GHIORDES, Turkish.

9 | LADIK, Turkish.

1 | BERGAMA, Turkish

"The Caucasus" is the name given to the area which lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea with the Don River as its northern boundary. Its southern border may be said to lie roughly along a line from Trebizond on the Black Sea to the southern tip of the Caspian. It is strictly the name of the area's most prominent feature, the precipitous range of mountains whose peaks rise to 17,000 feet.

Fine rugs were woven both north and south of the mountains and the rug names are usually either those of the districts in which they were made or of the tribes who made them. A very large group, well illustrated in the exhibition, takes its name from the south-eastern province of Shirvan (*nos. 23 to 26*). Other rugs from the same area, actually sub-types, are known by different names, which are usually derived from the tribe or locality. Baku, a rug-making centre on the Caspian Sea, gives its name to a type of Shirvan rug with very distinctive designs (*no. 17*). The Kazak rugs, named after another town, are probably the best known of all Caucasian rugs (*nos. 20 and 21*). A distinctive type of rug known as Daghestan comes from the province of that name, north of the Caucasus on the Caspian side, but some types from the same general area, such as Chichi and Seichour are distinguished separately. The Chichi rug (*no. 18*) and the Seichour rug (*no. 22*) are examples from this region.

From evidence of technique and design it is probable that rugweaving spread to the Caucasus from Turkey and Persia but examples earlier than the eighteenth century are rare. The knot used is the Turkish one, and many geometric motifs in the designs are the same as those found in the Turkish rugs. Persian influence occurs where flowers and foliage appear. There is great variety in design, but radiating motifs such as sunbursts, medallions outlined with latch hooks, bold angular forms and clear areas of colour are most characteristic of Caucasian rugs. As in all other oriental rugs, the use of aniline dyes in the second half of the nineteenth century introduced a harsh note.

The yarn used is usually wool but cotton does occur. The wool ranges from white to quite a dark brown, and the two are often found mixed in the carding. Frequently yarns of different shades are plied together.

17 BAKU
Also called Chila. Second half of the nineteenth century. 6′3″ x 3′6″. 100 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

18 CHICHI
Middle of the nineteenth century. 6′1″ x 4′1″. 104.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. The Chichi tribe belongs to the large Shirvan family.

19 KARABAGH
First half of the nineteenth century. 15′8″ x 3′5″. 63 knots to the square inch. Warp: wool, Weft: cotton. There is a strong Persian influence in this rug, not only in design but also in range of colours.

20 KAZAK
Middle of the nineteenth century. 8′ x 5′10″. 45.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

21 KAZAK
Circa 1800. 5′ x 4′1″. 52.5 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

22 SEICHOUR
First half of the nineteenth century. 9′3″ x 3′1″. 128 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool. This is related to the Shirvan.

23 SHIRVAN
Second half of the eighteenth century. 5′5″ x 3′3″. 72 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

24 SHIRVAN
Second half of the eighteenth century. 11′9″ x 3′4″. 85 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

25 SHIRVAN
First half of the nineteenth century. 5′2″ x 4′. 99 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

26 SHIRVAN
Middle of the nineteenth century. 4′2″ x 3′. 112 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

8 | KUMURJI KULA, Turkish.

21 | KAZAK, Caucasian.

25 | SHIRVAN, Caucasian.

CENTRAL ASIAN RUGS

The rugmaking centres are in that part of Central Asia called Turkestan which lies east of the Caspian Sea, and extends into the Western Chinese province of Sinkiang. The Central Asian rugs in this exhibition were made by the nomadic Turcoman tribes who wander over vast distances throughout this area.

Turcoman rugs dating back to the eighteenth century no longer exist. They were made for the tribe's own use, not for commerce, and during the continuous wanderings they were subjected to great wear and tear which they could not withstand. That rug weaving by these tribes goes back for centuries is evident from the purity of the geometric designs which are very close to some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Turkish rug designs. There is also an extraordinary exactness in the weaving which is not met with in any other group of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rugs. The isolated lives led by most of these people was of course most conducive to the preservation of ancient designs and methods.

The best known rug name today, Bokhara, is that of a town and its district which are in southern Turkestan north of Afghanistan. It is in fact a misnomer as Bokhara is only a rug marketing centre and very few rugs that go by that name were made there. They are made by the Tekke, Salor and Sariq tribes.

Their designs are exclusively geometric, repeated elongated octagons broken up in endless different ways, being the most characteristic feature. It is the limited range of colour which distinguishes these rugs from all others. Deep sombre reds predominate with only small areas of blue, black, white and more rarely yellow. These look like jewels and seem to accentuate the low tones of the red.

Yomud rugs were made by the tribe of that name which belongs to the most westerly part of Central Asia, near the Caspian Sea. Their designs are similar to those in the "Bokhara" group but a brownish red is characteristic of them. Beshirs, which are woven by the Ersari tribes, reflect Chinese influence in the use of floral motifs, scrolls and spandrels.

The Turcomans not only used pile weaves for rugs but for all sorts of other household equipment, camel bags,

saddle and tent bags, tent bands and portiers, some of which are illustrated in this exhibition.

The yarn of Turcoman rugs is always wool of excellent quality and it is in this group that the finest rugweaving in the exhibition is to be found, notably in the Tekke and Yomud rugs. Both Persian and Turkish knots are used; the Persian invariably in the Bokhara group, commonly in Yomuds and Beshirs although the Turkish does sometimes occur.

Another confusing rug name is Samarkand. This again is a marketing centre and lies about a hundred miles east of Bokhara. Most rugs sold there come from Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan in Sinkiang and were made by Turcoman tribes in those areas. Samarkand rugs contain a mixture of Persian and Chinese influences. They are woven with the Persian knot but their designs have many Chinese elements. Wool, cotton and silk are all used in these rugs.

27 BESHIR
Middle of the nineteenth century. 10′3″ x 5′10″.
49 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

28 BESHIR
Second half of the nineteenth century. 10′5″ x 4′11″.
60 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

29 BESHIR
Second half of the nineteenth century. 16′ x 6′5″.
44 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

30 BESHIR
Second half of the nineteenth century. 3′10″ x 6′1″.
64 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

31 TEKKE BOKHARA
Circa 1800. 8′6″ x 7′. 147 knots to the square inch.
Warp and Weft: wool.

32 TEKKE BOKHARA
Second half of the nineteenth century. 4′7″ x 3′7″.
200 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

33 SALOR BOKHARA
Tent bag. First half of the nineteenth century. 2′5″ x 4′.
420 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

34 TEKKE BOKHARA
Tent bag. Middle of the nineteenth century. 3′4″ x 1′3″.
264 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

35 TEKKE BOKHARA
Tent bag. First half of the nineteenth century.
8′4″ x 1′3″. 220 knots to the square inch.
Warp and Weft: wool.

36 TEKKE BOKHARA
Tent bag. First half of the nineteenth century. 2′5″ x 1′.
299 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

37 YOMUD
Circa 1800. 8′3″ x 4′10″. 120 knots to the square inch.
Warp and Weft: wool. The so-called Anchor pattern.

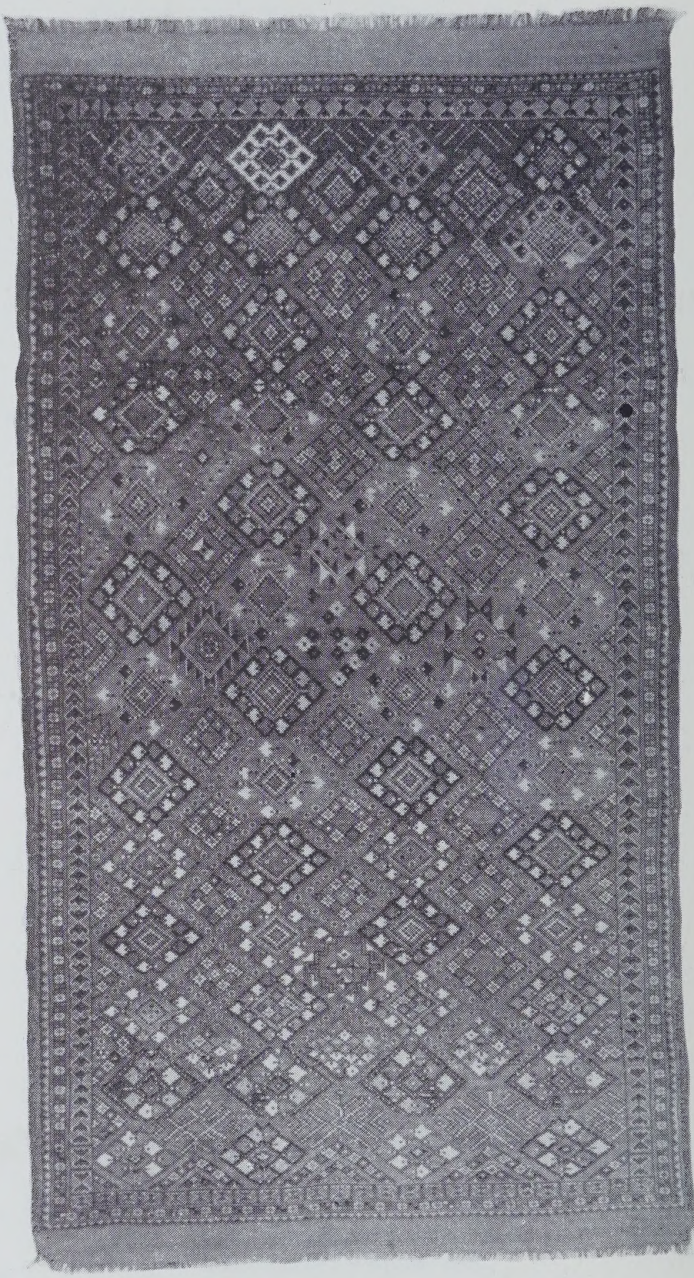
38 YOMUD
First half of the nineteenth century. 9′10″ x 5′11″.
160 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.
The so-called Fishbone pattern.

39 YOMUD
Tent band. Second half of the nineteeth century.
9′10″ x 1′3″. 224 knots to the square inch.
Warp and Weft: wool. Fragment of a long strip used
for hangings in tents. Such strips may reach 30 feet.

40 SAMARKAND (KHOTAN)
First half of the nineteenth century. 7′5″ x 3′10″.
48 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: wool.

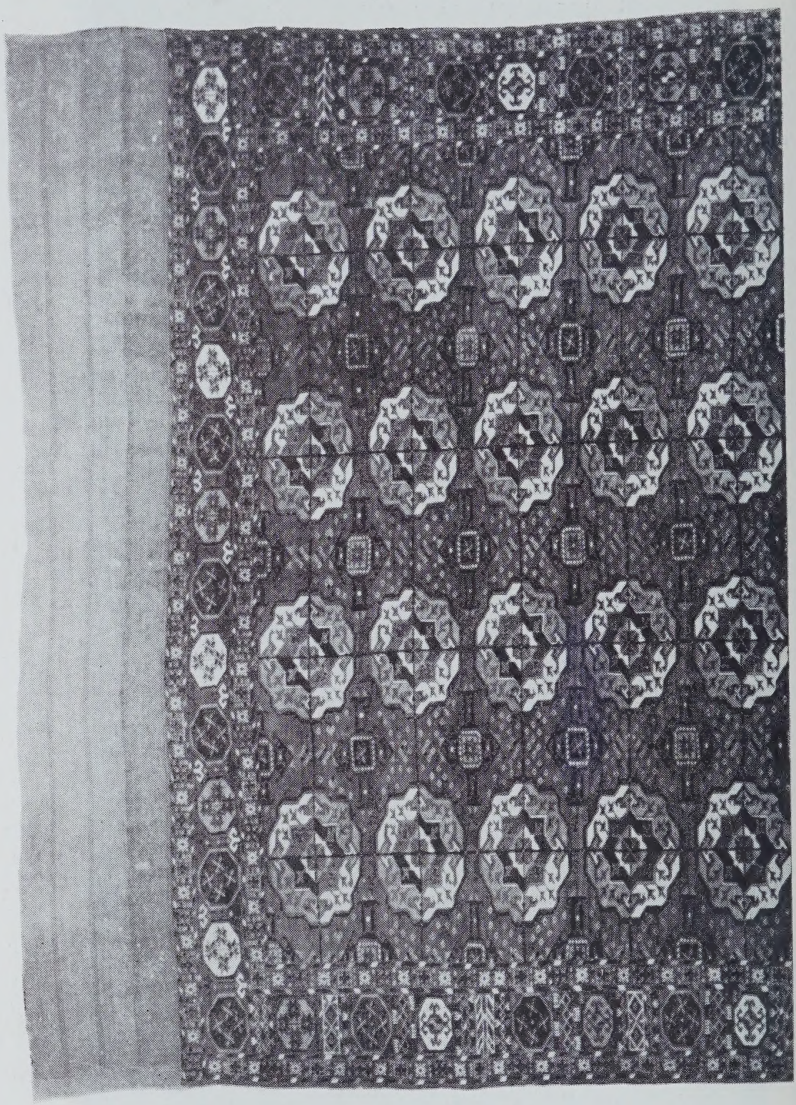
41 SAMARKAND (KASHGAR)
End of the eighteenth century. 8′5″ x 4′2″.
56 knots to the square inch. Warp and Weft: cotton.

42 SAMARKAND (KASHGAR)
Silk rug. Second half of the nineteenth century.
6′10″ x 3′10″. 64 knots to the square inch.
Warp and Weft: cotton; Pile: silk.

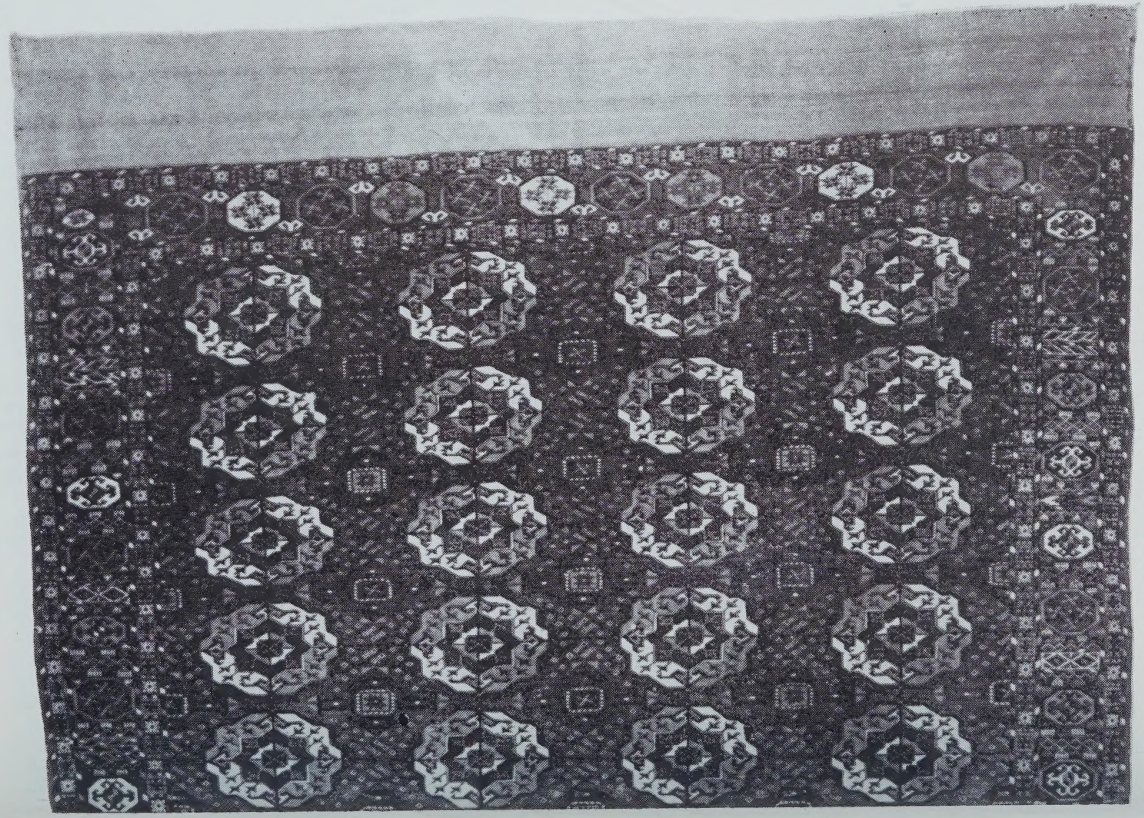


27 | BESHIR, Central Asian.

40 | SAMARKAND (KHOTAN), Central Asian.



31 | TEKKE BOKHARA, Central Asian.



FLAT WOVEN RUGS

Kilim type rugs have been woven in many parts of the world including Turkey and the Caucasus, but the group is a sadly neglected one about which little is known, and it deserves more serious consideration by students. The technique is very ancient and wide-spread, occurring in many parts of the world and is well suited to the geometric patterns of Oriental rugs. The designs of Kilims are often very similar to those of the pile rugs of the areas in which they are woven, as may be seen in Bergama Kilims. It is possible that they were woven for those who could not afford the costly pile rugs, or with their smooth, even silky, surface of fine worsted wool they may have been intended for summer use.

They are woven entirely of wool. The warp is usually similar in character to that of the pile rugs of the district and the weft is of very fine long staple yarn.

Sumaks are woven chiefly in the Caucasus around Derbent and Kuba though the name is possibly derived from a more southerly town, a marketing centre, Shemakha. Their designs are Caucasian in character. They are usually entirely of wool although sometimes cotton is used.

The Sileh rugs in this exhibition, woven in sumak technique, are both Caucasian. Number 47 is most characteristic of its type. The repeated 'S' motif is said to be a simplification of a dragon form of which only a vestige of a snout and a tail remain.

Acknowledgement

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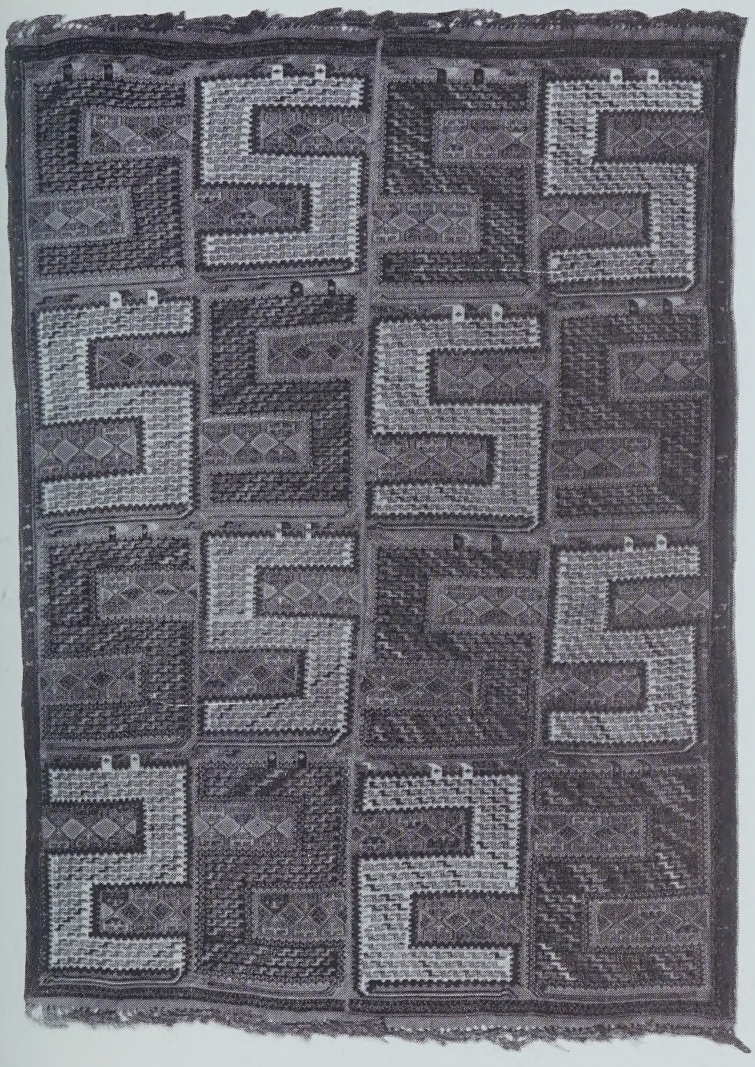

47 | SILEH SUMAK, Flat Woven Rug.

43 TURKISH KILIM
Second half of the nineteenth century. 8′2″ x 7′.
Made in Sharkoy on the Sea of Marmora.

44 TURKISH KILIM
Second half of the nineteenth century. 5′2″ x 3′8″.
Made in Sharkoy on the Sea of Marmora.

45 TURKISH PRAYER KILIM (Karamani)
Second half of the nineteenth century. 5′8″ x 3′10″.

46 TURKISH PRAYER KILIM (Bergama)
First half of the nineteenth century. 5′9″ x 5′5″.

47 SILEH SUMAK
Middle of the nineteenth century. 8′7″ x 6′2″.

48 SILEH SUMAK
End of the nineteenth century. 3′8″ x 2′.

Further Reading

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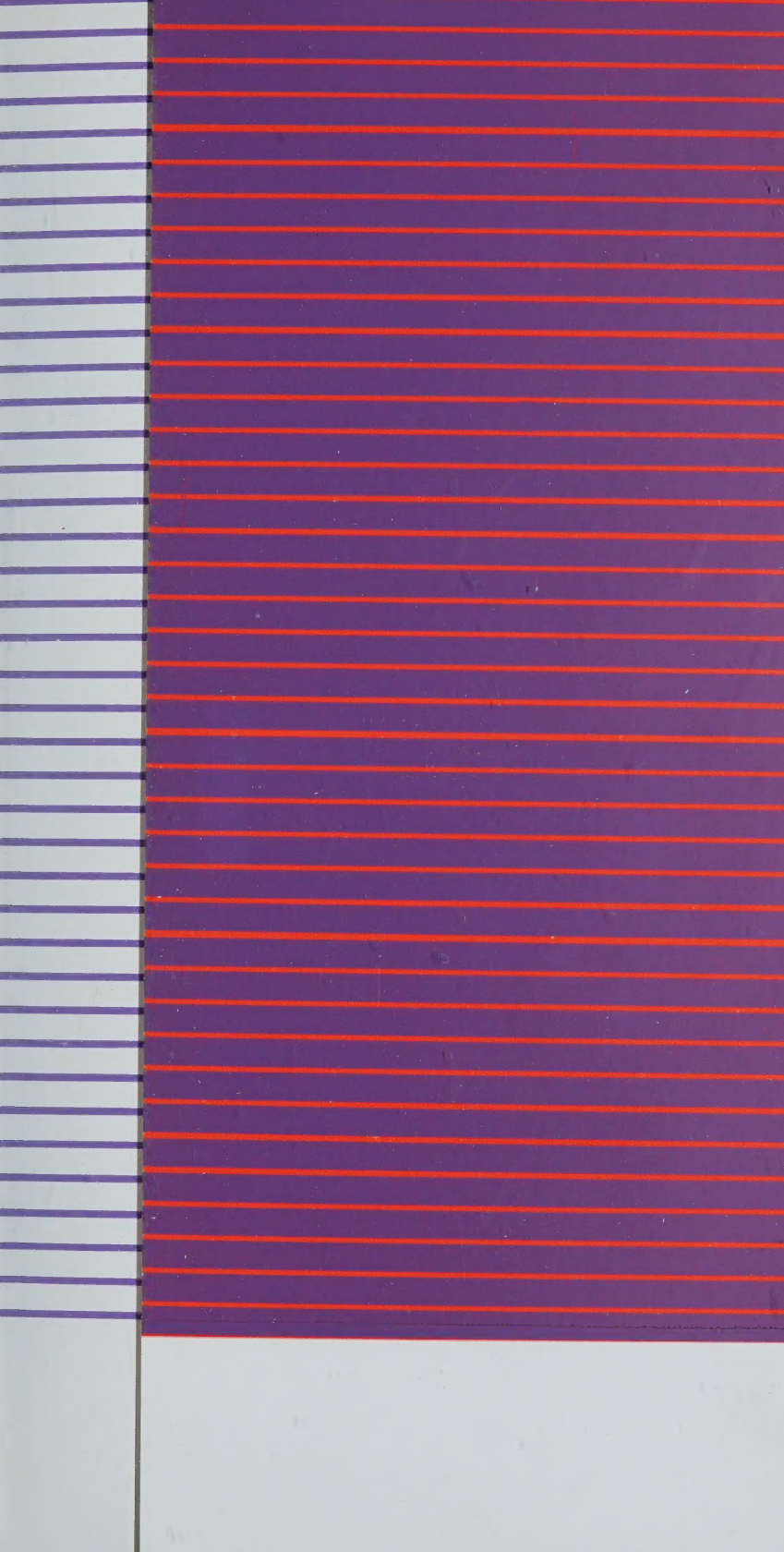
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